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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS
OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Letter dated 8 May 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw to your attention the statement on the National Assembly elections in Nigeria issued on 5 May 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) John WESTON
Permanent Representative of the
United Kingdom to the United Nations

* A/53/50.



ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the National Assembly elections in Nigeria issued
on 5 May 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union has been following closely the so-called transition to civil rule in Nigeria and has concluded that the process is a failure.

The final results of the March 1997 local elections and the final vote count for the December 1997 State Assembly elections have still not been released. The National Electoral Commission of Nigeria and Transition Implementation Committee documents on those elections have not been published. On the basis of these observations, and the recent announcement that the five registered parties have adopted Abacha as their consensus Presidential candidate, the European Union considers that the transition programme is in grave danger of being compromised.

None of the five registered parties met the deadline set by the Electoral Commission for the submission of the list of their candidates for the 25 April National Assembly elections. Indeed, some lists of candidates were still unpublished on the day of the election. The European Union is concerned about the arbitrary disqualification of candidates and the continued non-publication of the draft Constitution which provides the legal basis for these elections. In addition, many Nigerians who might otherwise wish to participate in such elections remain in jail.

The European Union concludes that the extremely low voter turnout for the State and National Assembly elections demonstrates that the Nigerian people no longer have confidence in the transition process.
